

to working with the Congress to achieve our common objective of a wider circle of security, prosperity, and common values embracing an integrated Europe and the United States.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; Strom Thurmond, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; and Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on National Security.

Letter to National Bioethics Advisory Commission Chair Harold Shapiro on Cloning Technology Issues

February 24, 1997

Dear Dr. Shapiro:

As you know, it was reported today that researchers have developed techniques to clone sheep. This represents a remarkable scientific discovery, but one that raises important questions. While this technological advance could offer potential benefits in such areas as medical research and agriculture, it also raises serious ethical questions, particularly with respect to the possible use of this technology to clone human embryos.

Therefore, I request that the National Bioethics Advisory Commission undertake a thorough review of the legal and ethical issues associated with the use of this technology, and report back to me within ninety days with recommendations on possible federal actions to prevent its abuse.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Remarks to the Democratic Business Council

February 24, 1997

Thank you very much, Tom and Carol. Chairman Grossman and Alan Solomont and Paul DeNino, thank you for taking on this important work.

Let me begin by thanking all of you for being here tonight and for your support, for

the things that you said earlier, and your high hopes for our country. And let me remind you that we are involved in an extraordinary endeavor with a great opportunity. In the last 4 years we changed the economic policy of this country, and we now are committed to investing in our people, expanding our trade, and balancing our budget. And the consequences have been truly extraordinary.

In the last 4 years, for the first time ever in one Presidential administration, we had 11½ million more jobs and record numbers of new businesses in every single year. The so-called misery index is the combined rates of unemployment and inflation. It's the lowest it has been in America since the 1960's. And every one of you who supported our efforts, who fought for our policies, who stood up for what we are trying to do played a role in that, and you should be proud of that.

We changed the direction of social policy in this country, putting family and community at the center of our concerns and substituting action for rhetoric. And that's one of the reasons, thanks for the crime bill, that we've had years of declining crime now and people actually can believe that their streets can be made safe for their children; one of the reasons we've had the largest decline in welfare rolls in the history of the United States.

We now have—I was telling the folks at the table tonight, from 1972 to 1989, it was an average of 4.8 percent of the American people on public assistance. When I took office there were almost 5½ percent of the people on welfare. Today, it's 4.6, lower than the average since 1972 and going down.

And the only thing I would ask you is, any one of you—my friend Stan Chesley has already hired two people off the welfare rolls. We have to set an example. We can't just exhort people. We now have to hire one million people from welfare to work in the next 4 years to meet the targets of the welfare reform law. Meeting the target of the welfare reform law means requiring people who can work to work but not cutting anybody off public assistance who is honestly committed to supporting her children and cannot find a job. So we changed the law. Now we have to do our part.

And I want to invite all of you to be part of what is a great and, I might add, a bipartisan effort to hire one million more people off the welfare rolls. And I ask for your support to pass the legislation in Congress to give special tax credits of up to 50 percent of a salary, capping out at \$10,000 a year, for anyone who hires anyone from welfare into the work force. We can do this.

And I know we can do it; I've added up all the numbers of all the employers of all sizes, of all kinds in America. This is a snap if we will just make a commitment as a country to do it. We owe it to the children in those families who deserve a chance to see their parents and themselves move into the middle class and have a shot at what we're all trying to build for our children in the new century.

Let me say that today we had some very, very good news on the education front. You know from the State of the Union that I believe this should be the primary focus of our new endeavors in the next 4 years. And today meeting in Washington, the National Convention of Community Colleges and all their trustees, and the American Council on Education, which includes 1,700 leaders of 2- and 4-year colleges and universities in America, both endorsed the education plan I put before the American people and the Congress in the State of the Union Address. So this is a good day.

And we are going to be able to create a country in the next 4 years where every 8-year-old can read independently, where every 12-year-old and every classroom and library in America is hooked up to the Internet, where every 18-year-old has a chance to go on to college, and where our adults can continue to learn for a lifetime. These things are good things, and we are moving in the right direction.

I can also tell you that I am confident that we will continue to reach out in a positive way to the rest of the world. The Secretary of State has had a great first trip on her first trip as Secretary of State around the world. I've been very proud of her, and I hope you have. And we have to continue to do that.

Let me just make one last point here. In the last 4 years if you were to ask me, "What did you do that was most significant," well,

those of us who count votes might say, "Well, you passed that economic plan in '93 by one vote, and it brought the country back and that's what happened in '96." Those of us who worry about the safety of our streets might say, "If it hadn't been for the crime bill passing and the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, well, we wouldn't have the crime rate coming down." Others might say the family and medical leave law and the other things we did surrounding family. Others might say the fact that we defeated the other party's attempt to drastically change the course of America by beating back the '95 budget, and we killed, I think, once and for all the dominant rhetoric of the last 20 years, which is that Government is the enemy.

Government is not the enemy. Neither is Government the solution. But we now know that every modern society that seeks to fulfill the potential of its people needs, through its Government, leadership in creating conditions and giving people the tools to make the most of their own lives.

I told somebody today that Hillary and I over the weekend needed a little break from all this seriousness, and we watched "Dante's Peak" at the White House movie theater—best perk about being President, the theater. [Laughter] And it's a movie about volcanoes, and I think it's a rather interesting movie because I'm interested in volcanoes. But I thought it was interesting that it was this movie, and the hero of the movie was an employee of the U.S. Geological Service. And the hero was nearly killed by the volcano, and in the end his life is saved by a technical contraption developed not for volcanoes but for space by NASA.

Government is not the enemy. [Laughter] They would have had no movie but for the Government. [Laughter] And I think we've earned the right to say that, that this Government is now smaller by 285,000 people than the day I took the oath of office the first time—285,000, the smallest since President Kennedy was in office; hundreds of programs gone, thousands of pages of regulation gone. The reinventing Government effort led by the Vice President still gathering steam, not about to just sit around and do no more.

But we have got to say these are things we have to do as a country, as partners. But apart from all that, I think maybe the thing that I would highlight is that in the last 4 years I hope we have created the conditions for seeing this country fulfill all of its potential because we have rejected the politics of division, whether it was based on race or religion or anything else.

I think I made the right decision in saying we should mend affirmative action and not end it. I think I made the right decision in saying that I did not think that we should turn our backs on legal immigrants in this country; this is a nation of immigrants. I think we did the right thing to support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and protect the religious liberties even of people whose politics are very different from mine and who believe they have a religious duty to try to remove me from office in the last election. [Laughter]

That's what made this country great. The first amendment guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of religious faith. I think we did the right thing to try to combat in a very aggressive way these church burnings. And I might say, the recent bombing of the gay nightclub in Atlanta reminds us that this work is not over. That was wrong, and we have to stand against those things. We have got to go forward together. We don't have anybody to waste.

And we surely have figured out finally that it is a great advantage to the United States to be the largest, most multiethnic, multireligious, diverse democracy in the world. We're still learning how to deal with it. But we still have to reach out to the rest of the world. We have to compete and win. And we have to educate our people to live and to be a humanizing, democratizing, freedom- and peace-promoting influence in the rest of the world. We can't do any of that unless we do it as one America. And I think that is a lasting legacy which you can all be proud of. And we have more work to do on that, and we will be doing more work.

Let me finally say that I appreciate your being here for our party because this is not something a President can do alone. I'm glad to see Secretary of Transportation Rodney

Slater here tonight, who's going to acquit himself so well in that job, and my friend and sort of family member, Senator Barbara Boxer, here, who needs your help to get re-elected in 2 years, and I hope you'll help her. She deserves it.

And we're trying to do this together, and we're trying to do it together with the Republicans in Congress insofar as we and they—to be fair to them, because we have honest differences—insofar as we and they can in good conscience do that. The atmosphere is different here. And we have to keep it positive, constructive, building, trying to get something done to make this country great.

And the last thing I want to leave you with is this. I said this in the State of the Union, but I want all of you to think about it because it applies to our personal lives and our business lives as well as the life of this Nation. It is rare when things are going well on almost all fronts. You have to go back a good while to find a time when the economy was as strong as it is, when it was working for small businesses as well as big businesses, when the welfare rolls were going down, the poverty rate was dropping, the inequality among classes of working people was dropping, when all these things are happening at the same time, and when we're not threatened from without. And the tendency when things are going that well is either to relax and just sort of lay back and let things happen and have a good time, or to, frankly, find small things to fight about and fall out about and to be divided about. It sounds counterintuitive, but it's true. If you think about it in your own life, you see that. And we must not do either one of those things.

This is a unique moment in the history of a country. When Abraham Lincoln was President, in the middle of the Civil War, someone asked him what his policy was, and he gave an answer that if I were to give it I would be nationally ridiculed. He said, "My policy is to have no policy. I am controlled by events." Think how you would feel if I said that. [Laughter]

Now, the truth is, he did have a policy. His policy was "I'm going to hold the Union together if I have to—if everybody in the country has to die, including me." That was his policy, and he adhered to it. But it was

also true that on a day-to-day basis he could have no policy, he was controlled by events. We are not controlled by events. We get to shape events. It is rare when this happens to a country.

And we cannot blow this opportunity, either by being complacent or by falling out over small things. This is a time to be big and visionary and active and aggressive and a time to do it together. That is what I want you to be invested in. That is what I want you to feel that you are participating in.

And whenever we announce a new initiative you agree with, or results of something you support, I want you to understand that it is all part of a bigger effort to create a country in which, really for the first time in our history, every person actually does have a chance to live out his or her dreams, a country which really can help to shape a world where there is more peace, more freedom, more prosperity, and in which we are organized in a different way to meet the different challenges to our security and to our values around the world.

This is a very good time, but it imposes a special responsibility on us because nobody is beating us on the back with a lash, making us do the right thing. Our existence is not hanging by a thread so that we pray for the largeness of spirit that people seek when they know that. We just have to do it because we understand that this is a unique opportunity, and we are not going to pass it by.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to C. Thomas Hendrickson, chair, Democratic Business Council; Carol Pensky, treasurer, Steve Grossman, national chair, Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, and Paul DeNino, finance director, Democratic National Committee; and attorney Stanley Chesley.

Proclamation 6973—American Red Cross Month, 1997

February 24, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Founded over a century ago by Clara Barton, the American Red Cross has evolved from a branch of the International Red Cross into a uniquely American institution, serving our Nation in peace and in war, and through countless natural disasters. Since the Spanish-American War, when the first volunteers brought emergency first-aid and news from home to wounded soldiers, generations of Americans have followed in this grand tradition of service.

Today, in communities across our Nation, a million and a half volunteers stand ready to help their neighbors at a moment's notice. Last year, Red Cross paid and volunteer staff assisted disaster victims across the country by opening more than 3,200 shelters and giving comfort to 172,000 people. The Red Cross also reached 16 million Americans through health and safety courses, including HIV and AIDS education and community outreach programs; collected more than 6 million units of lifesaving blood to keep our national blood supply ready, strong, and safe; and provided immediate counseling and support to the bereaved families of the victims of TWA Flight 800 and ValuJet Flight 592.

Overseas, American Red Cross workers provided emergency communications for our troops in Bosnia; worked with foreign Red Cross societies to rebuild the lives of civilian refugees in places such as the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda; and provided personnel, financial aid, and gifts of goods and services to the victims of international disasters and armed conflicts in every corner of the globe.

Since 1881, the size, scope, and complexity of major disasters have placed an ever-greater demand on the resources of the Red Cross. Yet, the generosity of our citizens has enabled the American Red Cross to continue